Government of
Saskatchewan

Annual Report
1985

Law Reform
Commission of
Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan

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Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan

The Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan was established by *An Act to Establish a Law Reform Commission,* proclaimed in November, 1973, and began functioning in February of 1974.

The commissioners are:

Prof. Douglas A. Schmeiser, Q.C., B.A., LL.B., LL.M., S.J.D., Chairman
Madam Justice Marjorie A. Gerwing
Mr. Gordon J. Kuski, Q.C., LL.B.

Mr. Kenneth P.R. Hodges, B.A., LL.B. is Director of Research.

Mr. Michael J. W. Finley, B.A., M.A., LL.B., and Mr. C. Peter Thagard, LL.B. are the Legal Research Officers, and Mr. Roderick J. Wood, LL.B., LL.M., Dip. in Legislative Drafting and Mrs. Sandy Antonini-Ready, B.A., LL.B. are Legal Research Officers under contract. The secretaries are Mrs. Sandra Ritchie and Miss Pat Harasymchuk. The summer students were Miss Trudy Curran and Mr. Don Layh.

The Commission offices are located at the Sturdy-Stone Centre, 122 Third Avenue North, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7K 2H6.

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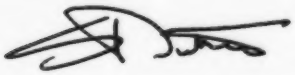
Letters of Transmittal

The Honourable F. W. Johnson, Q.C.,
Lieutenant Governor,
Province of Saskatchewan.

Sir:

I have the honour of submitting the annual report of the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan for the year ending December 31, 1985.

Respectfully submitted,



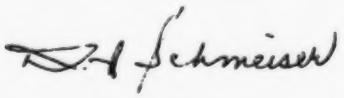
Sid Dutchak,
Minister of Justice
and Attorney General

The Honourable Sid Dutchak,
Minister of Justice,
Regina, Saskatchewan.

Sir:

I have the honour of submitting the annual report of the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan for the year ending December 31, 1985.

Respectfully submitted,



Douglas A. Schmeiser, Q.C.,
Chairman

Objectives of the Commission

The Law Reform Commission Act provides that:

"The commission shall take and keep under review all the law of the province, including statute law, common law and judicial decisions, with a view to its systematic development and reform, including the codification, elimination of anomalies, repeal of obsolete and unnecessary enactments, reduction in the number of separate enactments and generally the simplification and modernization of the law, and for that purpose shall:

(a) receive and consider any proposals for the reform of the law that may be made to it by the Minister of Justice;

(b) prepare and submit to the Minister of Justice from time to time programs for the examination of different branches of the law with a view to their reform and shall recommend that an agency, whether the commission or a committee thereof or other body, carry out the examination;

(c) undertake, at the request of the Minister of Justice or pursuant to recommendations of the commission approved by the Minister of Justice, the examination of particular branches of the law and the formulation, by means of draft bills or otherwise, or proposals for reform therein;

(d) enter into agreements, with the approval of the Minister of Justice, with other organizations for law reform for the purposes of attaining the aims of the commission," R.S.S. 1978, c. L-6, s. 6 as amended.

The Commission's role is to review provincial law and to assess criticisms of a significant nature from the general public against legislation and rules of the common law.

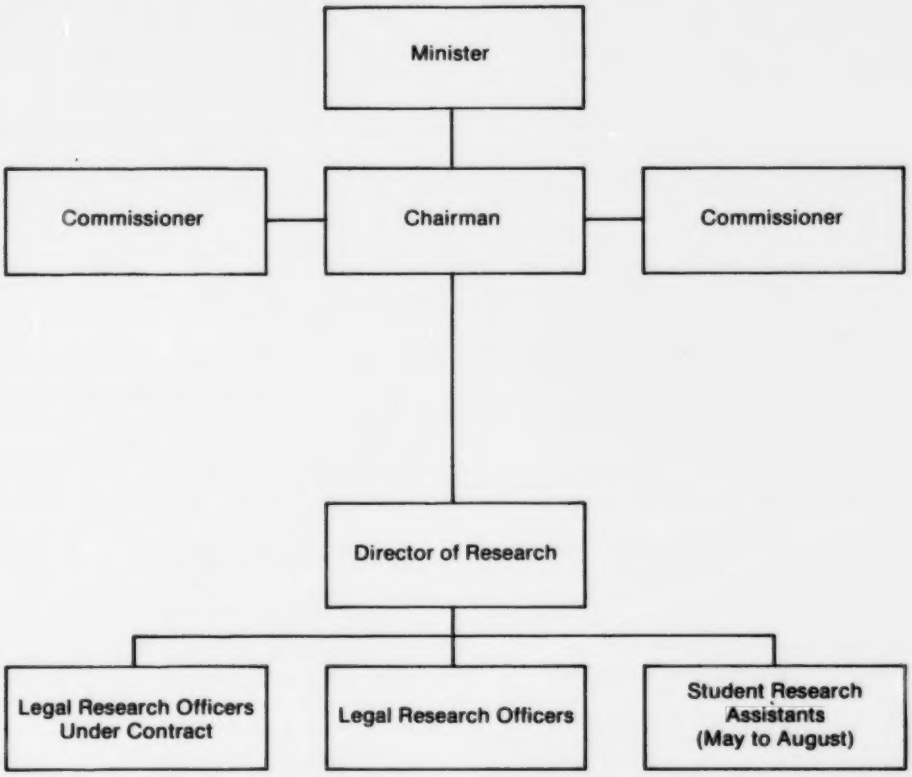
Topics for the Commission's research program are brought before meetings of the Commission for consideration. These topics may originate from a recommendation by the Minister of Justice, from the Commission and its staff, from the judiciary, from the legal profession, from other professional organizations, or from the public generally. If a proposal for law reform originates from sources other than the recommendation of the Minister of Justice, the Commission considers the proposal and, if it feels the proposal is one which requires research and report to the Minister of Justice, it will propose to the Minister of Justice that such research be undertaken. Once the consent of the Minister of Justice is obtained, a research program is instituted which culminates in a report to the Minister of Justice.

All research undertaken is supervised by the Chairman and Director of Research. Much of the research is done by the Commission's full-time staff. Many projects, however, require substantial outside consultation and expertise.

Consequently, the Commission relies on the academic staff of the College of Law of the University of Saskatchewan and elsewhere for research personnel. Legal practitioners also act as consultants from time to time and give to the Commission a practical assessment of possible recommendations for legislative and procedural change. The participation of practising lawyers is being facilitated through financial assistance provided by the Law Foundation of Saskatchewan.

Once the research study in a particular project is completed, the matter is placed before the Commission for discussion and consideration. The Commission may decide to issue background papers, or more likely papers in the form of tentative proposals, for circulation to the public in order to obtain criticism and comment prior to the preparation of a final report. This may entail public meetings, hearings and workshops. After public comment has been assessed, the Commission's recommendations are embodied in a final report to the Minister of Justice. This report may contain general recommendations, specific legislation or drafting instructions suggesting the form of legislation which will best implement the recommendations of the final report.

Organization Chart



Description of the Programs and Activities carried out during 1985

The programs and activities carried out during 1985 to a large extent are a continuation of projects commenced earlier. Some of the projects are extensive in scope and involve research in a number of areas of law.

I. Family Law Project

The Commission, with the consent of the Minister of Justice, initiated a research project on family law in June of 1974.

In 1974 the Commission issued a background paper entitled "Family Maintenance Between Husband and Wife". Shortly thereafter a background paper entitled "Children's Maintenance" was released.

Research in the area of maintenance procedures was completed and a report dealing with maintenance enforcement was released in March, 1982. Research into the substantive law of maintenance was also completed some time ago and it is expected that tentative proposals will be issued in 1986.

A paper on joint custody was prepared but has not gone to the Commission pending passage of the federal *Divorce Act* which contains provisions relating to custody and maintenance.

A draft paper on illegitimacy was completed some time ago. This paper has not however been approved by the Commission.

The Commission has completed its review of *The Matrimonial Property Act* which came into force on January 1, 1980, along with the relationship of that Act and *The Homesteads Act* as well as *The Dependants' Relief Act* and *The Intestate Succession Act*. Tentative Proposals for Reform of The Matrimonial Property Act were released in October, 1984 and a final report was submitted to the Minister of Justice in December 1985.

II. Consumer Credit Project

The study of consumer credit law in Saskatchewan and proposals for reform of it is a part of the overall study of personal property security law in Saskatchewan. The Commission decided that proposals for the reform of basic chattel security law should be developed first, since the structure and terminology of a totally reformed personal property security law system would necessarily be part of the reform of consumer credit law.

Pursuant to this approach, a final report entitled "Proposals for a Saskatchewan Personal Property Security Act" was issued in July, 1977. *The Personal Property Security Act* which stems from the proposals was enacted by the Legislature in 1980 and came into force on May 1, 1981.

The Consumer Credit Project is well underway and the following paper was released in 1980: "Tentative Proposals for a Consumer Credit Act, Part I: Background and Underlying Considerations, Part II: Statistics". A second paper entitled "Tentative Proposals for a Consumer Credit Act, Part III: Secured Consumer Credit Transactions, Summary of Recommendations" was issued in May, 1981. Further research is presently being considered for the following areas:

Credit Grantor Responsibility for Defects in Merchants' Performance Obligations;

Extra-Judicial Debt Collection Practices;

Credit Insurance;

Enforcement of Credit Consumer Rights;

Disclosure;

Credit Reporting;

Discrimination in Credit Granting.

As the study progresses, it may be necessary to revise this list, add to it or consolidate two or more items into a single paper.

Professor Ronald C.C. Cuming, Q.C., College of Law, University of Saskatchewan, is in charge of this project. He is being assisted by the Commission staff.

III. Provincial Offences Project

A study of the doctrine of strict liability has been completed and a report entitled "Tentative Proposals for Defences to Provincial Offences" was released early in 1981. Formulation of the final report is underway and should be released in 1986.

IV. Medical-Legal Project

"Tentative Proposals for a Human Artificial Insemination Act" was released in November, 1981. There have been a number of meetings of interested groups to discuss the Tentative Proposals including a meeting with representatives of the Saskatchewan Medical Association and the College of Physicians and Surgeons. Work is being done on a final report which should be completed in 1986.

"Tentative Proposals for a Lieutenant Governor's Review Board in Saskatchewan" was released early in 1984. These proposals were based on a report by Professor Peter MacKinnon, Collee of Law, University of Saskatchewan. It is expected that a final report will be issued in 1986.

V. Administrative Law Project

Preliminary research was done on this project during the summer of 1978 on (a) Statutory Powers of Decisions in the Licensing/Inspection Category of the Statutes of Saskatchewan, and (b) A Review of Benefit/Compensation Statutes.

During 1980-81, a consultant worked in the areas of administrative procedures and remedies. The project is now being worked on by a member of the Commission staff and a report by way of tentative proposals should be released in 1986.

VI. The English Statutes Project

This project involves consideration of the statute laws of England which are in force in this province. Too often lawyers are faced with the problem of determining whether or not an ancient English statute is or is not law in Saskatchewan. The British have been pruning and tidying their statutes for almost a century and, in the interests of greater certainty, it is time for the common law provinces, including Saskatchewan, to put their own houses in order. Extensive work on this project was done in 1984 and 1985, and a paper is expected in 1986.

VII. The Limitation of Actions Act Project

This project involves major policy issues including mandatory notices of claims within specific periods of time, commencing actions within specific periods of time and the categorization of various actions to determine the appropriate limitation period.

Much preliminary research was completed by a student in the summer of 1979. A list of the limitation periods to be found in the Statutes of Saskatchewan prepared for this project was published in the *Saskatchewan Law Review* Vol. 45, No. 1, p. 103 and this has been of assistance to practising members of the bar.

A short report entitled "Tentative Proposals for Changes in Limitations Legislation, Part I: The Effect of Limitations on Title to Real Property" was released in July, 1981. Further work on this project is being continued by the Commission staff. A report by way of tentative proposals should be released in 1986.

VIII. Frustrated Contracts Project

Saskatchewan is one of the few provinces that does not have legislation which regulates the rights of parties in cases where a frustrating event prevents or substantially affects performance of a contract. The common law rules dealing with frustration are generally unpredictable and unfair.

The Commission decided in 1979 to undertake a study of this area of law. The project consists of the following parts:

(a) An analysis of the present common law of Saskatchewan applicable to frustration of contracts. This part will illustrate and discuss all the problems which have been covered by the frustrated contracts legislation.

(b) An analysis of the common law and statutory provisions applicable to the frustration of contract in the United States and the manner in which they deal with the problems which have been subjected to statutory regulation in Commonwealth jurisdictions.

Under heading (a) and (b) two types of issues will be dealt with:

(i) the circumstances in which the contract is deemed to be frustrated.
(ii) the legal effects of frustration.

(c) Reasons for legislation. This part will analyze the desirability of passing an Act regulating the substantive and/or the remedial law of frustration.

(d) Evaluation of the different statutes enacted elsewhere and their effect on the common law. This part will also contain a summary of recommendations and a proposed statute.

A report based on the work of Professor Louis J. Romero, College of Law, University of Saskatchewan and Mrs. Anne Skarsgard is now being prepared by the Commission staff.

IX. Sale of Goods Act Project

Saskatchewan's sale of goods law, like that of all other common law provinces in Canada, is based almost entirely on the English *Sale of Goods Act* of 1893. While some areas of sales law have been subject to special legislative measures, the general law of sales has never been revised in Saskatchewan since its enactment. Veneration of nineteenth century English sales law by Canadians has not been shared by the English. Their statute has been amended four times. It would be inaccurate to conclude that existing sales law is totally out of touch with the realities of modern commercial activity. The basic concepts of the 1893 *Act* remain relevant. Judicial development of sales law has been substantial over the years and generally has taken account of fundamental changes in sales practices. However, a strong case can be made for recodification and modernization of Canadian sales law.

In 1979, the Ontario Law Reform Commission released an extensive report on sale of goods law containing recommendations for extensive revision of the Ontario *Sale of Goods Act*. At the August meeting of the Uniform Law Conference held at Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, a motion was passed providing for the convening of a committee to examine the Ontario report and general sales law with a view to developing a Uniform Sale of Goods Act for all provinces in Canada.

In view of the fact that work in the area was to be carried out on a national level with the opportunity for co-operation among law reform agencies, the Commission decided that it should participate in the joint project under the auspices of the Uniform Law Conference.

The Uniform Law Conference Committee met regularly throughout 1980 and 1981. Professor Cuming represented the Commission at these meetings and proposed substantial amendments to the Ontario Law Reform Commission Draft Act. The Committee reported to the Uniform Law Conference in August of 1981 and its report containing a uniform draft act was accepted.

Professor Ronald C. Cuming, Q.C., College of Law, University of Saskatchewan, is in charge of this project.

X. **Products Liability Project**

The Saskatchewan *Consumer Products Warranties Act* provides a regime of "strict liability" for consumer products. In other words, the *Act* provides recovery for loss resulting from defects in consumer products even though the supplier is not negligent in placing the product on the market. However, the *Act* does not apply to a situation where the product which has resulted in loss or injury is not a "consumer product" within the meaning of the *Act* or where the consumer product has been obtained for purposes of resale or for use in a business. For example, if a vehicle or a piece of equipment was purchased for use in business and as a result of a defect in it a person is injured, liability for the defect would have to be established under the law of negligence. Of course, in any action involving the liability, the nature of the proceedings, the burden of proof and the extent of recovery would be different from what it would be if *The Consumer Products Warranties Act* applied. Generally, the injured person would be in a much less advantageous position than would be a person injured as a result of a defect in a consumer product.

The Canadian law of tort has been very slow to accept "strict liability" as a basis for liability in cases of defective products, although in some circumstances our law has moved toward "strict liability" as a basis for liability in cases of defective products, through the use of the doctrine of *res ipsa loquitur*. By contrast, courts in American jurisdictions have rejected negligence and have developed "strict liability" as a basis for compensation of persons injured by defective goods. There is little indication that Canadian courts are yet prepared to follow the American lead.

However, there is a very strong undercurrent of dissatisfaction with existing Canadian law of negligence. Recently, the Ontario Law Reform Commisson published a report on products liability which recommended a modified strict liability scheme to be implemented by legislation.

It is the conclusion of the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan that the time has come to "rationalize" the law of Saskatchewan so as to ensure that the likelihood of recovery for loss resulting from defective products does not depend upon the almost fortuitous event that the product causing the injury was sold under a transaction to which *The Consumer Products Warranties Act* applies.

A considerable amount of work was done during 1981. Professor Ronald C. C. Cuming, Q.C., College of Law, University of Saskatchewan, is in charge of this project.

XI. **Real Property Law**

The Commission is planning a major research project on the real property law of Saskatchewan. Its scope and format have yet to be determined. It has been decided that the best way to proceed with the project is to identify a few areas of real property which are a matter of immediate concern. Two areas so identified are:

(1) the need for a *Quieting of Title Act;*

(2) *foreclosure of mortgages and charges against land and cancellation of agreements for sale (including The Land Contracts (Actions) Act).*

Some years ago the Commission engaged the services of a consultant who prepared a paper on the need for a *Quieting of Title Act*. The Commission came to the conclusion that, with changes in the limitation periods governing titles, there was no need for such an Act. These changes were put forward in the Commission's report entitled, "Tentative Proposals for Changes in Limitations Legislation, Part I: The Effect of Limitations on Title to Real Property", issued as part of its Limitations of Actions Act Projects in July, 1981.

A draft paper covering security interests in land has been prepared by the Commission staff and will be considered by the Commission.

XII. The Land Titles Act Project

The Commission decided during the latter part of 1981 to undertake a fundamental review of *The Land Titles Act*. Particular attention will be paid to the machinery of the land titles system, the function of the registrar, the forms prescribed by the *Act*, the effect of registration, transfers, mortgages, leases and caveats with or without supporting documents, obsolete or what may be obsolete sections as well as the relationship of other statues with *The Land Titles Act* such as *The Tax Enforcement Act, The Mineral Taxation Act* and *The Planning and Development Act*. The project is being carried on with representatives from Alberta, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and others. Some of the fundamental principles underlining the Torrens system were discussed at a meeting held in Edmonton in December of 1981, and it is expected that there will be further meetings in this regard. In the meantime, it is expected that background research will be carried on throughout 1986.

XIII. New Home Warranties

Many Saskatchewan residents buy newly constructed houses for use as family residences. However, the sale of houses by model and the growing specialization in components such as air conditioning and heating systems have made it much more difficult for consumers to ensure that they are obtaining a building which meets certain basic standards of durability and safety. Unlike the purchaser of consumer goods, the purchaser of a new home in Saskatchewan is forced to rely substantially on common law. It is somewhat anomalous that the purchaser of a small appliance such as a toaster obtains the full protection afforded by the warranty provisions of *The Consumer Products Warranties Act*, whereas the purchaser of a house which has a much greater value receives no similar statutory protection and very little protection under the common law. At common law, in the absence of an express statement by the builder, implied warranties as to fitness of habitation or quality of workmanship and materials only apply if the house is not yet completed. If it is completed, the doctrine of *caveat emptor*, long since abolished in the area of sale of goods, still applies.

The deficiencies in the common law were recognized in Ontario, and a *New Home Warranties Act* was passed in 1967. The Commission has been exploring the feasibility of a study which would lead to recommendations for legislation providing purchasers of new homes in Saskatchewan with an adequate measure of legal protection against construction and material deficiencies and which would bring the law applicable to the sale and purchase of new homes more in line with that applicable to the sale and purchase of consumer goods. However the project is in abeyance until the services of a consultant are obtained.

XIV. The Enforcement of Money Judgments

The law of Saskatchewan dealing with the enforcement of money judgments is very much in need of modernization, consolidation and rationalization. Work in this area of the law which is large and complex will be undertaken if the services of a consultant can be obtained.

XV. The Guardianship Act: Part II: Property Guardianship

The Commission began a study of the law governing guardianship of the property of mentally incapacitated persons. Existing legislation is contained in several statutes such as *The Mentally Disordered Persons Act, The Administration of Estates of Mentally Disordered Persons Act, The Mental Health Act* and *The Trustee Act*. The study is to include a detailed review of the provisions of *The Mentally Disordered Persons Act* which in some aspects are out of date. Work is proceeding in-house on this project.

XVI. Costs of Accused on Acquittal

Recently arrangements were made with the President of the Law Reform Commission of Canada to undertake a study of Costs of Accused on Acquittal as a joint project. Professor Peter MacKinnon, College of Law, University of Saskatchewan, has agreed to act as consultant and is preparing a report for consideration by both Commissions.

XVII. **Review of The Marriage Act**

Professor Ronald Fritz, College of Law, University of Saskatchewan has been engaged to review *The Marriage Act*. It is expected that he will have a paper prepared for consideration by the Commission in 1986.

XVIII. **Exemption Clauses**

The services of Professor Donald H. Clark, College of Law, University of Saskatchewan, have been engaged to study the law governing exemption clauses. A report is expected in the fall of 1986.

XIX. **The Rule Against Perpetuities and The Accumulations Act**

A short report is expected to be issued in 1986 dealing with the rule against perpetuities and *The Accumulations Act*. There probably will be a recommendation that the rule against perpetuities be abolished.

XX. **Other Activities**

On occasion, representatives of the Commission have met with or made presentations to public organizations, service groups and others, and have explained the role of law reform to students. When reports are released by way of tentative proposals, press releases are issued, press conferences held and appearances made on radio and television. While law reform often is a highly technical matter, law does not operate in a vacuum and every effort is made to keep the general public fully informed of the Commission's activities. The commission and its staff is always receptive to comments from organizations and members of the public.

Members of the Bar have been invited to suggest areas in need of reform, and have brought to the attention of the Commission many difficulties encountered in everyday practice. The Commission is attempting to involve the practising Bar to a greater degree in law reform, and has undertaken to deal with several smaller practice oriented problems, in some instances engaging the same lawyers who brought the anomalies to its attention.

Final Reports to the Minister of Justice in 1985*

Proposals Relating to the Change of Name of Children of Divorced Parents

The Commission examined the provision of *The Change of Name Act* which has the effect of denying a non-custodial divorced parent the right to be consulted upon an application for change of name of his or her child. This provision, first adopted in 1947, does not reflect contemporary custody law, which places emphasis on maintaining relationships between a child and both parents whenever possible. It is also of note that no other province has a similar provison.

The Commission has recommended that a change of name of a child by his or her custodial divorced parent should not ordinarily occur without the consent of the other parent. The recommendation would also apply to the consent of a putative father of a child born out of wedlock in those exceptional cases where the child has already taken the father's name. The Commission further recommended that where the necessary consent to a change of name cannot be obtained, a judge of the Court of Queen's Bench or a judge of the Provincial Court may grant an order dispensing with the consent but only where it is in the interests of the child to do so.

Proposals Relating to Joint Obligations

The Commission reviewed the distinction in contract law between obligations that are joint, and obligations that are joint and several. This distinction arises whenever two or more persons together make a promise to a third person. The Commission recommended abolition of the distinction by deeming all joint obligations to be joint and several. In addition, the Commission recommended that where a joint and several obligation is owed by two or more persons, a release of one should not ordinarily release the others.

Proposals for a Survival of Actions Act

The Commission examined the law dealing with survival of actions, finding it uncertain and unsatisfactory. In some cases the victim's estate recovers everything the victim could have recovered had he lived; in other cases, the estate recovers nothing. Whether lost future earnings can be recovered by the victim's estate is debatable.

The Commission recommended that sections 58 to 60 of *The Trustee Act* be repealed and replaced with a Survival of Actions Act providing that:

1. An action should survive the death of the victim whether or not the death resulted from the injuries inflicted by the wrongdoer.
2. An estate should not have a claim for non-pecuniary loss of the deceased.
3. An estate should not have a claim for lost future earnings of the deceased.
4. An action should survive the death of a wrongdoer, but a claim for exemplary damages should not survive unless its purpose is to strip the estate of the profits of the wrongdoing.

Proposals for a Compulsory Mental Health Care Act

The Commission reviewed involuntary hospitalization of mentally disordered persons, one of the most typical aspects of mental health care legislation. There is a need to provide adequate care to persons who require treatment in an institutional environment in order to be able to cope with the problems of life. On the other hand, there is a need to protect the mentally ill from unwarranted restraint on their personal liberty. While treatment of medical illness is fundamentally a medical matter, treatment in an institution without the patient's consent is also a legal matter. The Commission's proposals seek an acceptable balance. Those who are confined to an institution should be protected by a court of law if long term institutionalization is required. The Commission has also endeavoured to reflect the spirit of *The Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in its recommendations.

Proposals Relating to Matrimonial Property Legislation

The Commission reviewed *The Matrimonial Property Act* and made 13 proposals identifying the principles which the Commission believes should underlie such legislation.

The proposals are based on the notion that marriage is a partnership in which the spouses are entitled to share property accumulated through their joint efforts during marriage. But, the report notes, "any simple statement about matrimonial property may be deceptive". Enshrining the partnership concept in workable legislation is the challenge facing legislators and law reformers. The report makes reference to the varying approaches to matrimonial property division in other jurisdictions.

*Copies are available from the office of the Law Reform Commission.

The Commission's proposals are embodied in 13 recommendations based on the fundamental principles which the Commission believes matrimonial property legislation should contain. The major recommendations may be summarized as follows:

Presumption of Equal Division
Property acquired during marriage should be subject to equal division between spouses. The court should have a structured discretion to depart from equal division where it would be fair and equitable to do so, but the relative contributions of the spouses should not be a factor for the court to consider.

Failure to Contribute
The court should have a discretion to depart from equal divison of matrimonial property where there has been a wilful and nearly total refusal to contribute to the marriage, except where there is a reasonable excuse for the absence of contribution.

Exemptions
The value of property owned by either spouse at the date of marriage should be exempt from distribution.

Any increase in the value of property brought into marriage that results from an improvement to the property made by either spouses should ordinarily be subject to equal division between the spouses.

Any increase in the value of property brought into marriage that is not the result of an improvement to the property should ordinarily be exempt from division, except in the case of a long marriage where both spouses have made a contribution to the maintenance, preservation, or management of property.

The court should have a discretion to increase or decrease the exemption in appropriate cases.

Gifts and Inheritances during marriage.
Gifts or inheritances received by a spouse during marriage should be presumed to be exempt from division. The presumption should be rebuttable, however, if it is shown that the gift or inheritance was intended for both spouses.

Matrimonial Home
The matrimonial home should be given special status.... Equal division of the home should be departed from only in exceptional circumstances, and when the home has been brought into marriage by one of the spouses the exemption should be limited to the value of the home at the date of marriage, less the value of any encumbrance on it.

The Homesteads Act should be repealed and replaced with a provision in matrimonial property legislation requiring consent of both spouses to sale or encumbrance of the matrimonial home.

Pensions
Pension rights and benefits should be, by definition, matrimonial property ... one useful method is to value the pension on the basis of employee contributions and interest during marriage.

Informal Reports to the Minister of Justice in 1985*

The Commission examined *The Family Services Act*, and recommended that the definition of parent should include putative fathers. As a result, all putative fathers would *ab initio* be entitled to notice of committal and adoption proceedings and their consent to adoption would be required unless the court otherwise orders. The Commission also recommended that the provision in the present Act permitting the court to dispense with notice be widened so that in the appropriate case the hearing may proceed without delay. In addition, the Commission recommended that voluntary committal of a child by agreement should only be permitted when both parents agree. Finally the Commission recommended that no order of adoption should be made unless notice of the petition of adoption has been given to the persons who should be entitled to notice, i.e., the parents (including the putative father), any person who stands in the place of a parent and any other person, who, in the opinion of the court, has a sufficient interest in a child.

Proposals Relating to The Labour Standards Act: Employers' Deductions from Wages

This report deals with the authority of employers to make deductions from employees' wages and in particular in the situation where the employee has stolen property belonging to the employer. The Commission recommended that *The Labour Standards Act* be amended to:

1. Lay to rest a residual uncertainty in the present law by expressly prohibiting deductions from wages not specifically authorized by the statute.

2. Codify all deductions permitted by law.

3. Identify circumstances where it would be reasonable to award the procedural advantage to the employer by permitting a deduction.

4. Allow the Director of the Labour Standards Branch of the Department of Labour to prospectively approve deductions not specifically mentioned.

Proposals Relating to Lis Pendens

The Commision reviewed the statutory provisions relating to removal of a *lis pendens* and noted that where a plaintiff is unsuccessful at trial and appeals, and subsequently discontinues the appeal, the *lis pendens* can only be removed by a court order. This is so even if all matters have been settled and both parties are agreeable to removal of the *lis pendens*. The Commission concluded that in these circumstances the expense and inconvenience of a court application should not be necessary.

The Commission proposed three methods for removing a *lis pendens* from a title. First, a party who files the *lis pendens* should be able to withdraw it. Second, the filing of a certificate of an officer of the court confirming that the action has been finally determined against the plaintiff should effect a discharge of the *lis pendens*. Third, the court should be empowered to make an order vacating the registration of a *lis pendens*.

*Copies are available from the offices of the Law Reform Commission.

Plans for the Year 1986

1. **Family Law Project**

It is expected that work will continue during 1986 on the substantive law of maintenance and the matter of joint custody.

2. **Consumer Credit Project**

Work will continue on this project, particularly in the areas of the cost of credit disclosure, credit insurance and credit grantors' liability for merchants' default in performance.

3. **Provincial Offences Project**

A final report entitled "Proposals for Defences to Provincial Offences" should be released sometime in 1986.

4. **Medical Legal Project**

It is expected that a final report containing "Proposals for a Human Artificial Insemination Act" will be made to the Minister of Justice in 1986.

It is expected that a final report containing "Proposals for a Lieutenant Governor's Review Board in Saskatchewan" will be made to the Minister of Justice in 1986.

5. **Administrative Law Project**

The Commission staff will be working on this project during 1986.

6. **English Statutes Project**

Work will continue on a paper dealing with old English Statutes in force in the province, which should be available in 1986 for study and comments by members of the legal profession.

7. **The Limitation of Actions Act Project**

It is expected that a paper will be released during 1986.

8. **Frustrated Contracts Project**

It is expected that a paper will be released during 1986.

9. **Sale of Goods Project**

This project continues to be monitored by the consultant.

10. **Products Liability Project**

This project continues to be monitored by the consultant.

11. **Real Property Law Project**

It is expected that a paper on security interests in land will be available in 1986.

12. **The Land Titles Act Project**

This project is in abeyance at the present time.

13. **New Home Warranties**

This project is in abeyance at the present time.

14. **The Enforcement of Money Judgments Project**

This project is in abeyance at the present time.

15. **Property Guardianship**

It is expected that work will be undertaken in the area of property guardianship in 1986.

16. **Costs of Accused on Acquittal**

This is a joint project with the Law Reform Commission of Canada and it is expected that the consultant will have a paper prepared for the two Commissions in 1986.

17. **Review of The Marriage Act**

It is expected that a paper reviewing The Marriage Act will be available in 1986.

18. **Exemption Clauses**

It is expected that the consultant will prepare a report on the law governing exemption clauses in 1986.

19. **The Rule Against Perpetuities and The Accumulations Act**

It is expected that a paper will be released during 1986.

20. **Other Activities**

The Commission has undertaken a number of smaller practice-oriented projects and it is expected that recommendations will be made to the Minister of Justice concerning living wills, the removal of a certificate of commencement of action from a title to land under *The Builders' Lien Act*, section 63 of *The Automobile Accident Insurance Act*, and other matters.

Financial Information

Budget for fiscal year April 1, 1985 to March 31, 1986.

Appropriation:

Personal Services	$237,280
Other Expenses	73,800
	$311,080

The Law Foundation of Saskatchewan supports some of the Commission's work by "block funding". Under this arrangement the Commission has been able to engage the services of two full-time legal research officers. Some of the projects which have been or are being supported financially by the Foundation are: Review of The Matrimonial Property Act and the relationship of that Act with *The Homesteads Act, The Intestate Succession Act* and *The Dependants' Relief Act;* Committal under a Lieutenant Governor's Warrant; Consumer Credit; Frustrated Contracts; Testamentary Guardianship; English Statutes and Limitation of Actions.

The Commission wishes to express its appreciation to the Law Foundation of Saskatchewan for its financial assistance.